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ABSTRACT

Since its inception in 1941, Outward Bound has retained certain core values, but some instructors and administrators have been concerned that these principles are no longer being conveyed in practice. With the collaboration of 13 experts, the 11 principles of Outward Bound programs in the United States were identified and defined. These principles are judgment and action, self-discovery, self-development, dealing with success and failure, responsibility to community, service, compassion, commitment in the face of challenge and uncertainty, environmental awareness, cooperation, and introspection. A questionnaire assessing the importance of each principle and its inclusion in Outward Bound course components was completed by 76 participants and 44 staff in adult standard courses held at the North Carolina and Colorado Outward Bound schools. All groups perceived that the 11 principles were important to Outward Bound and were experienced by students some or all of the time. Mean scores for importance of principles ranged from 5.4 to 6.6 on a 7-point scale in which 7 is "extremely important." Mean scores on conveyance ranged from 4.5 to 6.2. Principles that had a mean of 5.0 or lower on conveyance were introspection for North Carolina students; compassion for Colorado students; service, environmental awareness, and introspection for North Carolina staff; and service and introspection for Colorado staff. The most important course components for conveying all principles were daily living activities with group members, group expeditions, and final expedition. Suggestions are offered for program improvement and further research. (SV)

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OUTWARD BOUND: THE CONGRUENCE OF PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

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OUTWARD BOUND: THE CONGRUENCE OF PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

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A questionnaire was developed to determine how well principles were conveyed during standard courses at two Outward Bound schools. Results showed that the principles of the schools were important and conveyed. Comparisons showed some differences in perception regarding the principles of compassion, cooperation, environmental awareness, and service. Recommendations for further research were made.

KEY WORDS: *Outward Bound, importance/performance, values, service, espoused theory, theory-in-use*

Outward Bound is an educational institution that purports to offer a form of moral and social education reflecting the educational thought of Kurt Hahn. Since the school's inception in 1941, Outward Bound has retained certain core values, including compassion, service, self-reliance, self-development, and responsibility.

Outward Bound has expanded to 40 schools and centers in 19 countries; seven of these are in the United States. The programs, which have changed to meet the needs of a changing society and clientele, have similar core values to those Kurt Hahn championed. Daniel Vokey (1987) raised the question, however, as to whether or not changes in methods being used at Outward Bound are undermining their commitment to certain core values—specifically, developing self-reliance, value forming experiences, and promoting compassion through service. In a discussion of change and the future of Outward Bound in the United States, Templin and Baldwin (1976) stated that "As more and more students and staff venture forth to work in adaptive programs...the risk of dilution grows. Many feel that the integrity of the process is already in jeopardy" (p. 35). Thus, there exists among some instructors and administrators close to Outward Bound a concern that the school may not be promoting the values that it purports.

Argyris has shed some light on the issue of why an espoused theory—core values, in the case of Outward Bound—may not be the same thing as theory-in-use (Argyris, 1976; Argyris & Schon, 1978). A person's "theory in use" (Argyris, 1976, p. 639) is what the person *does* on the basis of his or her conceptualization and interpretation of his or her espoused theory. Theory in use governs a person's actions, but may not be compatible with espoused theory. Interestingly, people are not usually aware that they are not acting according to their espoused theories (Argyris, 1976).

As an organization Outward Bound interprets its espoused theory, the core values of the school, and offers courses that follow a standard curriculum thought to convey its principles. Based on Argyris' (1976) work, it is plausible to assume that there may be some discrepancy between what Outward Bound wishes to convey and what is actually conveyed. Based on issues raised by Vokey (1987), Templin & Baldwin (1976), and the argument presented by Argyris' theory, there are several questions that can be addressed to help answer the question of whether the principles of Outward Bound are being conveyed in practice.

The first question is: What are the principles (core values) of Outward Bound in the

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United States today? This must be answered in order to develop a questionnaire. The second question is: Are these principles perceived as important by instructors and students? It seems relevant to explore the perceptions of both instructors and students because of the potential for differences in perception. Instructors will have their individual interpretations of how important the principles of Outward Bound are, and these may or may not match the importance placed on the principles by the organization. Furthermore, students may perceive that something quite different is important than what the instructors intended to convey. The third question is: Are these principles being conveyed in practice according to instructors and students? Again, instructors will have individual interpretations of how to best convey the principles of Outward Bound, and students may perceive that something different is conveyed than what the instructors intended.

As a school committed to moral and social education, the question of whether Outward Bound is able to convey its principles in practice is an important one. Perhaps now, more than ever, Outward Bound is making important decisions that will influence its future direction as programs are increasingly altered to meet the needs of more diverse clientele, including groups like urban youth-at-risk and corporate executives. Additionally, Outward Bound serves as a role model for many other adventure education programs that follow its lead.

Purpose of the Study

The first tasks were to obtain agreement from a panel of experts on how the principles of Outward Bound could best be described and to develop an instrument to assess whether or not the principles were conveyed in practice. The purpose of the study was to describe how congruent Outward Bound's principles are with its practices. Perceptions of instructors and students were assessed regarding (a) the importance of each principle, (b) how well each principle was conveyed in practice, and (c) which course components best portrayed each principle.

Method

This was a descriptive study utilizing an instrument developed for the purpose of measuring the congruence of principles and practice at Outward Bound in the United States. The instrument was developed in three steps. First, the researcher prepared a list of principles from a review of the literature (Estes, 1990). Second, these principles were used to create a questionnaire based on the importance/performance evaluation method developed by Martilla and James (1977) to measure product and service satisfaction. Language was chosen to anchor the 1 to 7 Likert-type scale based on the "delighted-terrible" scale introduced by Westbrook (1980) in an attempt to gain differentiation between expected high-end responses. The questionnaire was then sent to a panel of thirteen experts selected by the researcher and Mitch Sakofs, research director for Outward Bound, Inc., for review of the principles and instrument design. Modifications were made based on comments and concerns. Third, a pilot study was conducted with instructors and students at the Joshua Tree base camp of the Pacific Crest Outward Bound School. Twenty-three usable student questionnaires, and ten instructor questionnaires were used to run a reliability check with Cronbach's alpha of .92 (student) and .90 (instructor) respectively. Comments and observations from the pilot were also used to further refine the questionnaire. Table 1 lists the final versions of the 11 principles used in the study.

For each principle, respondents were asked "How important should the (fill in the name of the principle) principle be to an Outward Bound course?" and "Do participants experience the (fill in the name of the principle) principle during an Outward Bound course?" Respondents answered these two questions using a seven-point scale, with 1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest. For the question of importance, anchors ranged from "not at all important" to "extremely important," and for the question of conveyance anchors ranged from "not at all" to "all the time."

Additionally, standard course components were listed for respondents to indicate which most contributed to the convey-

TABLE I

The 11 Principles of Outward Bound Programs in the United States Used in the Questionnaire

Name of the Principle	Description of the Principle
Judgment and Action	Participants at Outward Bound make intelligent judgments and take responsible action based on those judgments
Self Discovery	Participants at Outward Bound become more aware of their strengths and limitations
Self-Development	Participants at Outward Bound face challenges and take actions to develop their strengths and weaknesses
Success and Failure	Participants at Outward Bound learn to work constructively with both success and failure individually and as a group
Responsibility to Community	Participants at Outward Bound learn the value of contributing responsibly to the successful functioning of the community
Service	Participants at Outward Bound learn the value of service and develop their capacity to help others in need
Compassion	Participants at Outward Bound develop increased empathy for others who are different from themselves
Value of Commitment	Participants at Outward Bound learn the value of demonstrating initiative, hard work, and personal integrity in the face of challenge and uncertainty
Environmental Awareness	Participants at Outward Bound develop an understanding of the natural environment and demonstrate care in using it
Cooperation	Participants at Outward Bound learn to judge when cooperation is needed during an activity and to apply themselves with commitment to the team effort
Introspection	Participants at Outward Bound learn the value of introspection and periods of silence

Source: Estes, 1990

ance of each principle. Participants were asked to place a check by any course component they felt conveyed a principle and a check-plus next to those course components they felt were *particularly* influential in conveying that principle. Course components listed included:

1. Statement on the purposes of Outward Bound at the course start
2. Fitness training and conditioning (during the course)
3. Search, rescue and first aid training
4. Not using tobacco, alcohol or drugs
5. Personal interview with instructor
6. Daily living activities with group members (e.g., food preparation, setting up camp, etc.)
7. Map & compass skills & route finding
8. Readings, group discussions, and briefings
9. Instruction in environmental protection and low impact use
10. Group initiatives (e.g., "knots" or the "wall")
11. Rock climbing, rappelling and rope handling
12. Group expeditions (e.g., backpacking, mountaineering, canoeing, or rafting)
13. Final expedition
14. High ropes course
15. Solo
16. Keeping a journal
17. Service project(s)

18. Marathon
19. Special instructor presentation of the (fill in the name of the principle) principle
20. Other (fill in the blank)

The North Carolina (NCOBS) and Colorado Outward Bound Schools (COBS) were selected for three reasons: COBS was the first Outward Bound school in the United States and therefore has the longest history of operation; NCOBS follows a standard course format to COBS using backpacking expeditions; and, both schools agreed to participate. Obtaining agreement to participate in research from Outward Bound schools can be difficult due to the large numbers of requests they receive. Additionally, courses already have extremely full schedules, and there is an understandable desire to not interfere with the participants' experiences.

The researcher collected data by visiting the course-end sites for adult standard courses in North Carolina and Colorado in the Spring of 1990 to administer the questionnaires. Adult standard course participants were selected due to age appropriateness for the instrument and the length of program. The standard course was felt to be the most likely to typify an Outward Bound course due to the length and opportunity to participate extensively in each course component. The numbers of students participating in the study was small due to limited funds available for data collection. The researcher deemed it important to be present to collect the data because of the danger of having missing or incomplete data. Outward Bound instructors are quite busy at the end of a course, and imposing an extra task like completion of questionnaires would invite problems likely to result in incomplete data. It was decided, therefore, to collect a smaller number of questionnaires but to obtain 100% participation from the students at each course for an accurate description. In addition to the staff questionnaires collected by the researcher, school administrative staff assisted with collecting data from instructors. Table 2 shows numbers of instruments collected and gender of respondents. There were relatively few instructor questionnaires collected from staff due to various difficulties, including reluctance to spend time on questionnaires and miscommunication with school administration.

Analysis of Data

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency were reported to address five research questions: perceptions of importance and conveyance of the principles, group differences, ranking of mean scores, course components, and quality of instruction. Mean scores on importance and conveyance were graphed on an importance/performance grid to illustrate areas of strength and weaknesses (Martilla & James, 1977). Differences in group means were determined using a one-way ANOVA with a post-hoc analysis (alpha level = .05). Table 3 illustrates the results of mean scores calculated for the questions of importance and conveyance of the 11 principles.

TABLE 2

Demographic Information on Respondents by Group

	NCOBS Students	COBS Students	NCOBS Staff	COBS Staff	Totals
Gender	**n (%)**	**n (%)**	**n (%)**	**n (%)**	**n (%)**
Male	19 (49)	16 (43)	10 (77)	19 (61)	64 (53)
Female	22 (51)	19 (57)	3 (23)	12 (39)	56 (47)
Totals	41 (100)	35 (100)	13 (100)	31 (100)	120 (100)

TABLE 3

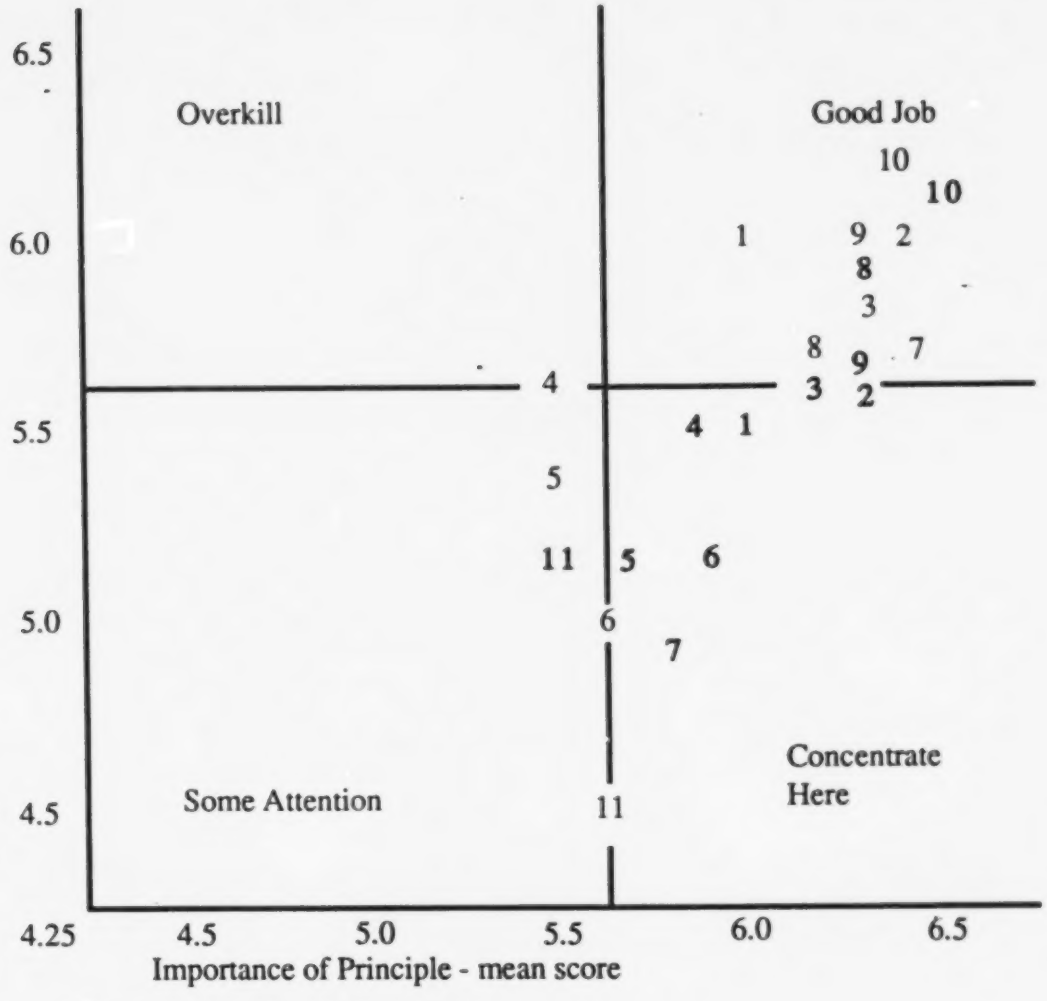
Group Means[1] for the Questions on Importance, Conveyance and Quality of Instruction for All Respondent Groups

Name of Principle[2]	NCOBS Students (n=41)	COBS Students (n=35)	NCOBS Staff (n=13)	COBS Staff (n=31)
Judgment & Action-I	6.0	6.0	5.9	6.0
Judgment & Action-C	6.0	5.5	5.3	5.4
Self-Discovery-I	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.2
Self-Discovery-C	6.0	5.6	5.8	5.6
Self-Development-I	6.3	6.2	5.9	6.0
Self-Development-C	5.8	5.6	5.3	5.6
Success & Failure-I	5.5	5.9	5.5	5.7
Success & Failure-C	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.8
Resp. to Community-I	5.5	5.7	5.4	5.8
Resp. to Community-C	5.4	5.2	5.4	5.8
Service-I	5.6	5.9	5.6	6.0
Service-C	5.0	5.2	4.7	4.9
Compassion-I	6.4	5.8	5.9	6.3
Compassion-C	5.7*	4.9*	5.5	5.4
Value of Commitment-I	6.2	6.3	5.9	6.1
Value of Commitment-C	5.7	5.9	5.3	5.4
Environ. Awareness-I	6.3	6.3	5.7*	6.6*
Environ. Awareness-C	6.0	5.6	5.0	5.7
Cooperation-I	6.4*	6.5	5.6*	6.3
Cooperation-C	6.2	6.1	5.6	5.7
Introspection-I	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.5
Introspection-C	4.5	5.2	5.0	4.5
Overall Quality of Instruction at this Outward Bound School	6.4	6.2	6.0	5.9

1. Scale = 1-7
2. "I" = importance; "C" = conveyance.

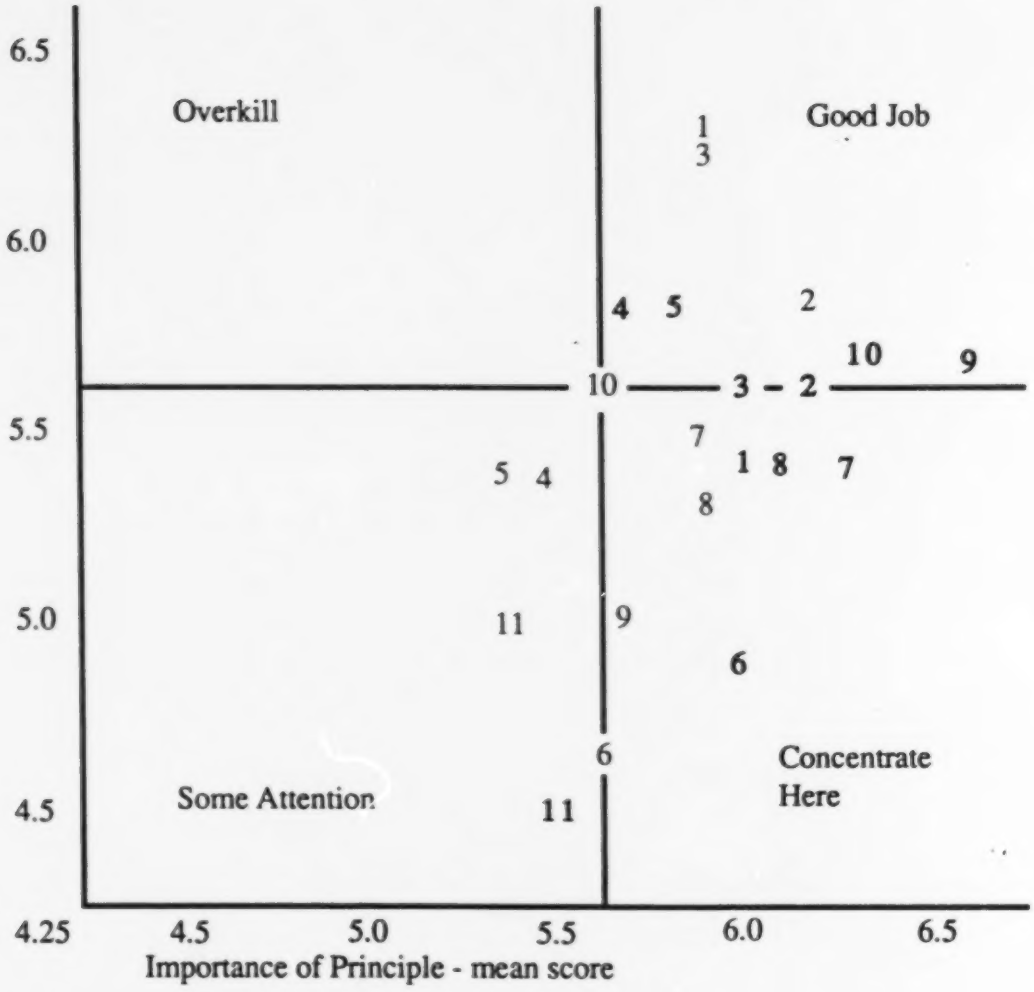
* Significant difference between groups at .05 level, one-way analysis of variance with post-hoc analysis using the Sheffe statistic.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate visually the respondents perceptions of how important the 11 principles were and how well they were conveyed in practice.



Key:
1 Judgement & Action
2 Self-Discovery
3 Self-Development
4 Success & Failure
5 Responsibility to Community
6 Service
7 Compassion
8 Value of Commitment
9 Environmental Awareness
10 Cooperation
11 Introspection

Figure 1. Plot of mean scores for importance and conveyance of principles for NCOBS (plain text) and COBS (outline text) students.



Key:
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6 Service
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8 Value of Commitment
9 Environmental Awareness
10 Cooperation
11 Introspection

Figure 2. Plot of mean scores for importance and conveyance of principles for NCOBS (plain text) and COBS (outline text) staff.

The importance/performance grid is designed to visually display data in each of four quadrants. Those principles falling into the "Good Job" category are perceived as very important and being conveyed well. Those principles falling into the "Overkill" category are perceived as being conveyed well but not as very important. Those principles falling into the "Some Attention" category are perceived as being somewhat important and somewhat conveyed. Those principles falling into the "Concentrate Here" category are those perceived as being very important and somewhat conveyed.

The purpose of this visual display is to assist users of the data with making decisions as to where to focus time and resources to improve products or services (Martilla & James, 1977). The placement chosen for the cross-grid on the diagram is by necessity subjective and cannot be determined until after the data have been analyzed. The researcher reviews the mean scores and then determines the best grid placement. Several questions are considered: (1) Where does the bulk of the data fall?; (2) Where can the grid be placed at the same point on both the X and Y axes so that the data falls as equally as possible into all four quadrants?; and (3) Where can the grid be placed to function well for all groups studied? (Martilla & James, 1977). In Figures 1 and 2, the mid-point is around 5.6, well above midpoint (3.5) on the 7 point Likert scale, indicating that all responses are fairly high. Table 4 illustrates the ranked importance of each of the 11 principles to each other based on mean scores for each group.

Discussion

The first question was "How important are the principles of Outward Bound and how well are they conveyed in practice according to students and instructors at NCOBS and COBS?" All four groups perceived that the 11 principles were important to Outward Bound and were experienced by standard course students in varying degrees ranging from "some of the time" to "all the time" (see Table 3). In all but two cases, fewer than eight percent of the group's responses were at the low end (from 1 to 3 on the scale). These two exceptions were that 15 percent of COBS students had responses ranging from 1 to 3 on the compassion principle and 12 percent of the NCOBS students had responses ranging from one to three on the conveyance of the introspection principle. These high-end responses on the question of conveyance of principles in practice were expected. Overall, Outward Bound is considered to be a highly effective program (James, 1980; Miner & Boldt, 1981; Sakofs, 1989).

Mean scores for the importance of the 11 principles ranged from 5.4 to 6.6. According to the anchors on the scale used for this question, a 5 was "important," a 6 was "very important," and a 7 was "extremely important." These high means indicate that all 11 of the principles were considered to be important by students and staff at the North Carolina and Colorado Outward Bound Schools.

Mean scores on the conveyance of principles were somewhat lower, ranging from 4.5 to 6.2. On the anchors of the scale used for this question a 4 was "sometimes," a 5 was "frequently," a 6 was "often" and a 7 was "all the time." The principles that had a mean of 5.0 or lower on conveyance were introspection for NCOBS students; compassion for COBS students; service, environmental awareness, and introspection for NCOBS staff, and service and introspection for COBS staff. The results indicate that NCOBS staff rated their ability to convey service and environmental awareness lower than did the NCOBS students, and the COBS staff rated their ability to convey service and introspection lower than did the COBS students. These findings are consistent with those of Sakofs (1989) and MacArthur (1982), who also found that staff were not as positive about their ability to convey the principle of service as some of the other values.

The importance/conveyance figures illustrate relative differences in the perceived importance and conveyance of the principles according to the four groups. For the students at both schools the principles of introspection, service, and responsibility to community were in the "concentrate here" or "some attention" quadrants (see Figure 1). Also notable was that the compassion prin-

ciple was well into the "concentrate here" quadrant for the COBS students. For the instructors at both schools, the principles of introspection, service, value of commitment, and compassion were in the "concentrate here" or "some attention" quadrants (see Figure 2). Additionally the environmental awareness principle was well into the "concentrate here" quadrant for the NCOBS students. While the placement of the grid lines is high on the scale (5.6 out of 7), the principles of service and introspection still consistently appeared for all four groups in either the "concentrate here" or "some attention" quadrants.

TABLE 4
Relative Importance of the Principles for the Four Respondent Groups

NCOBS Students			COBS Students		
Rank	**Principle**	**Mean**	**Rank**	**Principle**	**Mean**
1	Cooperation	6.40	1	Cooperation	6.50
2-3[a]	Self-Discovery	6.35	2	Value of Commitment	6.34
2-3[a]	Compassion	6.35	3	Environ. Awareness	6.33
4	Self-Development	6.32	4	Self-Discovery	6.23
5	Environ. Awareness	6.27	5	Self-Development	6.20
6	Value of Commitment	6.20	6	Judgment & Action	6.03
7	Judgment & Action	6.00	7	Service	5.94
8	Service	5.65	8	Success & Failure	5.88
9	Introspection	5.58	9	Compassion	5.76
10	Success & Failure	5.56	10	Responsibility to Community	5.70
11	Responsibility to Community	5.53	11	Introspection	5.53

NCOBS Staff			COBS Staff		
Rank	**Principle**	**Mean**	**Rank**	**Principle**	**Mean**
1	Self Discovery	6.15	1	Environ. Awareness	6.55
2-5[a]	Judgment & Action	5.92	2-3[a]	Compassion	6.27
2-5[a]	Self-Development	5.92	2-3[a]	Cooperation	6.27
2-5[a]	Compassion	5.92	4	Self-Discovery	6.19
2-5[a]	Value of Commitment	5.92	5	Value of Commitment	6.10
6	Environ. Awareness	5.75	6-7[a]	Judgment & Action	6.03
7	Service	5.62	6-7[a]	Self-Development	6.03
8	Cooperation	5.58	8	Service	5.97
9	Success & Failure	5.46	9	Responsibility to Community	5.80
0-11[a]	Responsibility to Community	5.42	10	Success & Failure	5.7
10-11[a]	Introspection	5.42	11	Introspection	5.5

[a] Mean score is equal to other mean score (or scores)

The second question was "Are there significant differences in staff and student perceptions of the importance and conveyance of principles of Outward Bound between and within NCOBS and COBS?" Significant differences between groups included the following: NCOBS students experienced the compassion principle more often that COBS students (perhaps due to increased emphasis during service project, readings, group discussions, and the final expedition); COBS staff perceived that the environmental awareness principle was more important than did NCOBS staff (perhaps due to differing course designs—mobile vs. base camp—and differing course environments); and NCOBS students experienced the cooperation principle more often than the NCOBS staff perceived (the program appears to be more effective in conveying this principle than the staff thought).

The third question asked, "Are there differences in relative importance of the 11 principles as perceived by the four groups?" There were no significant differences in rankings (see Table 4). One notable observation from the ranking of principles by importance was that all four groups ranked service as seventh or eighth out of 11. This is consistent with Sakofs' (1987) finding that staff only "slightly agreed" with the statement "Outward Bound is a value driven organization; its highest priority is service to people and society" (p. 61).

The fourth question asked: "Which course components from the standard course curriculum best convey each principle according to the groups?" Based on frequencies of checks and check pluses, the most important course components for conveying all principles were daily living activities with group members (e.g., food preparation, setting up camp, etc.), group expeditions, and final expedition. These activities comprise quite a bit of time on the course. Additionally, rock climbing, rappelling, and ropes course were activities that the students perceived as frequently conveying seven of the 11 principles. All of the standard course activities appeared to be very important to course outcomes.

A review of the responses as to which course components conveyed principles showed that overall, instructors consistently perceived that special instructor presentations, initiatives, and the interview course components conveyed principles more often than did the students. Conversely, no course components stood out as being consistently perceived as more effective by the students than by the instructors.

The fifth question asked "Are there differences in the overall quality of instruction as perceived by the four groups?" Responses ranged from "average" to "exceptional," with means between 5.9 and 6.4 from a scale of 1 to 7. There were no significant differences in these ratings, and quality of instruction was perceived to be high by all groups.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the principles were congruent with practice for the two standard courses studied. Given the design of this study, it is only possible to speak for the two standard courses studied, and it is not possible to generalize the findings to other Outward Bound courses at these schools or other locations.

This study does provide limited support for the claim that certain core values of Outward Bound are de-emphasized at the level of practice. The service and introspection principles at both of the schools and the compassion principle at the Colorado School are not being conveyed as often as most of the other principles. Additionally, the service principle was ranked in about the middle of the 11 principles in importance by all four groups. The literature indicates that service is still considered to be central to the Outward Bound experience (James, 1980; Vokey, 1987). Therefore the importance, conveyance, and rank of the service principle was rather low for an organization that claims service as a top priority for these two courses. Additionally, the judgement and action, responsibility to community, and value of commitment principles could have had increased emphasis as well.

A number observations were made based on the results that may be useful if verified by further study:

1. Determine if the service principle is not emphasized as much as Outward Bound would like. If so, search for methods to

increase the importance and conveyance of the service principle and continue to discuss creative ways to include this principle in different course environments.

2. Determine if the cooperation principle is consistently being conveyed to students better than the staff perceives. The components that were most effective were daily living activities, group expeditions, and final expedition. Group initiatives and the service project did not have as much impact in this area as the staff believed. Explore programming implications if this holds true for other courses.
3. Verify if climbing and rappelling convey as many principles in other courses as they did in this study. If so, ensure that climbing and rappelling activities are a part of each course. These activities appeared to be important in conveying many of Outward Bound's principles on the courses studied. The ropes course provided a valuable supplement to these activities.
4. Study the mobile course concept to see if it enhances students' experience with the environmental awareness principle. If so, spending as much time independent of base camp as possible may enhance this principle.

Other suggestions for further research include:

1. Conduct similar studies with other schools and different course types to increase generalizability and to compare the results.
2. Conduct a similar study to this longitudinally. Begin with students' expectations before the course, perceptions at course end, and again after six months and a year.
3. Consider including craftsmanship as a twelfth principle.
4. Make the questionnaire more visual and easier to complete to facilitate data collection from diverse populations.
5. Apply this style of questionnaire in other institutional settings where there is an interest in discovering how congruent principles are with practices.

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